

*To the Editors of the
Edinburgh Medical & Surgical Journal*

AN
INTRODUCTORY LECTURE
TO
THE THEORY AND PRACTICE
OF
MIDWIFERY;
BEING AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THAT SUBJECT,

Publicly delivered in London, October 4, 1829.

BY
THOMAS GREENING, M.D.
LATE OBSTETRIC PHYSICIAN TO THE CITY OF LONDON LYING-IN CHARITY,
&c. &c.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR EDWARD LIMEBEER, 19, GILTSPUR STREET,
FOUR DOORS FROM ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL.

1831.

[Price 3s. 6d.]

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

<https://archive.org/details/b21916640>

R33780

AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

TO THE

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MIDWIFERY.

THE subject of this Lecture will comprehend the state of Midwifery among the Greeks and Romans; and the improvements which have been made in it at various times, down to its present advanced state in civilized society.

Those who smooth the road to science or literature, and facilitate the acquisitions to others, are often more permanently useful than such as are pre-eminently learned themselves. The greatest personal or mental acquirements die with the possessors; but those who labor that others may be wise benefit all posterity. The founders of schools, of charities, and of lectures, are therefore entitled to no mean praise; and their fame deserves to live in the genius which they have excited, the patronage which they have bestowed, and the facilities which they have afforded to learning and to knowledge.

On the first woman it was denounced, "in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children:" and as soon as pain invaded the body, some

means of alleviating it would be sought for, which would give rise to the Obstetric Art in the first periods of time. The peculiar circumstances attending delivery, and the delicacy of their sex on such an occasion, would naturally lead the women to assist each other in these critical moments; and mothers, from some share of experience, would be better enabled to perform this important office for their daughters.

The earliest accounts we are able to obtain inform us, that Midwifery, like other branches of science, took its beginning from necessity; and, consequently, is so extremely ancient, that it seems to have sprung up with the first race of mankind: for notwithstanding the human body, in its original state, came perfectly formed from the hand of the Creator, with all its parts wonderfully adapted to perform their several functions; and although its strength and vigour were then unimpaired by intemperance and disease—yet nature, in the production of our species, not being always able to support and maintain her own laws, the difficulties to women in travail were nearly the same in the first ages as at present; and, consequently, stood in need of the like assistance, although, from the imperfection of the art, it could not then be had.

That which principally ennobles any science is the dignity of its object, and the public utility arising from it: consequently, if we may rate the value of Midwifery by the advantage it procures to the human race, it will be found superior to all others; in as much as most of them are only subservient to the conveniences of life; but on the due exercise of this art immediately depends the preservation of life itself, even in double capacity.

Midwifery has, indeed, often been degraded by ignorance and unworthiness of many who practised it; and sometimes has been made

a subject of levity by the licentious vulgar. Some of the medical profession there are, who, with more vanity than solid sense, think it below their dignity to exercise a manual art, or endeavour to save the life of their fellow creature by any other means than that of directing medicines, or feeling the pulse ; means too often vague and ineffectual, without the interposition and assistance of nature herself. But let it be remembered, that learned men in all ages have not only studied this art themselves, but also recommended it to the attention of others, as a curious branch of natural philosophy, which will afford the highest entertainment to a contemplative mind, and as a thing of the utmost importance to the community. It is not, indeed, necessary that a physician should practise Midwifery ; but if he is utterly unacquainted with that science, he is less entitled to the name, which implies a general and extensive knowledge of the healing art. *Omnes medicinæ partes ita connexæ sunt, ut ex toto separare non possunt.*—CELSUS, p. 221, 222.

Among the ancients, that venerable parent of physic, Hippocrates, not less illustrious for social virtue than his profound knowledge of philosophy, wrote several books professedly on Midwifery, and the diseases incident to women and children : and Aristotle, who was tutor to Alexander the Great, and, by his order, amply supplied with whatever the known world could afford relative to natural history, and the generation of animals, did not disdain to write on the same subject ; as did also Avicenna, who was a physician, and an Arabian prince.

Of the moderns, the celebrated Harvey, physician to King Charles, who discovered the circulation of the blood, also discourses largely on generation, and the birth of the human fœtus : and Ruysch, that laborious investigator and promoter of anatomical knowledge, not only practised Midwifery, but was appointed professor of that art by the states of Hol-

land. The learned Astruc, royal professor of physic, at Paris, and physician to the French king, gave public lectures on Midwifery ; and also Albinus, an illustrious professor of anatomy and surgery, in the university of Leyden.

Daily experience affords ample testimony of the great utility of Midwifery, whether it regards the preservation of individuals, in pregnant women, or extends its influence to the good of society in general. In preternatural cases, or profuse uterine hæmorrhages, where nothing but speedy delivery can save the patient's life, the timely and judicious assistance of an accoucheur snatches her, as it were, from the brink of the grave, and often preserves her infant also : he restores to the despairing husband the tender partner of his bosom, and gives consolation to all those who are united to her by the ties of blood and natural affection.

The art of Midwifery also principally constitutes and illustrates the *medicina forensis*, or that part of medicine which contributes to the public administration of justice, in what relates to virginity, pregnancy, and the natural period of utero gestation ; also to the forming a judgment whether unlawful means have been used to occasion abortion. It likewise directs as to the proper methods of discovering whether an infant was still-born, or destroyed after birth. Besides these cases, in which the decision of the accoucheur has no inconsiderable share, there are many other important points, which could not be satisfactorily cleared up, or properly determined, without his interposition ; and, therefore, the verdict of juries, respecting the legitimacy of children, indictments for rapes, or actions to obtain divorce, are chiefly guided by his report.

We are told, that when women under sentence of death plead their belly, execution is ordered to be delayed ; and that this matter is

generally determined by a jury of matrons : but, did not the law of the land expressly thus command it, those judges, who would admit of such juries, ought to be deemed matrons as well as they. To err on the charitable side is certainly excusable ; and did the evil rest here, it might be passed over in silence : but those who have not put off all sense of feeling and humanity must hear with horror and regret, that many children have from thence fallen victims to punishment who were not sharers in guilt, and have been entombed alive within their mother's womb. Dionis mentions a case of this kind, where a midwife of the Chatelet, at Paris, having examined a servant under sentence of death, and who pleaded her belly, positively declared she was not pregnant : in consequence of which she was immediately executed ; but when the body was publicly opened, a child was found in her womb ; the midwife was therefore obliged to pay a fine, and forbid to practise ever after. How often have young women brought forth children, who a few hours before had been declared pure virgins ! Indeed, men of knowledge and skill in their profession are not always free from error ; and that is always most excusable in those who have sufficient resolution and candor to confess it, for the benefit of others : but, if such as have judgment are sometimes mistaken, surely it ought to be a lesson of humility and caution to those who have either very little, or none at all. In a word, if it is of consequence to prove the legitimacy of children, and to prevent a spurious issue from inheriting the property of the law-heir ; if it is of importance to acquit the innocent, and punish the guilty, in the most horrid and unnatural of all crimes, that of child-murder, the public utility and private advantage of that science, on which such determinations chiefly depend, will then become sufficiently evident.

The wisdom of the Creator is not more conspicuous in the great and original work of creation itself, than in the means by which

succeeding generations spring up, and people the world; and if the inanimate bodies of shells, fossils, and other concretes, or the more beautiful and organized parts of matter in the vegetable system, so often engage the attention of the curious, surely the Obstetric Art would afford them entertainment much more rational and interesting. As it comprehends, in a degree, the natural history and physiology of the human body, and gives us an idea of the order and original disposition of its several parts; so it likewise tends to illustrate and explain the faculties of the mind resulting from them; the organs of sense being the first inlets to all our mental perceptions, which vary in their degrees of perfection, according to the perfect modification of those parts, and the due performance of their several functions. It would, indeed, be impossible to discover, by the nicest anatomical researches, that exquisite peculiarity of structure in the brain, which constitutes the difference between the wise man and natural fool: yet, as every effect implies an existing cause, such an identical difference may be reasonably inferred; for it would be unphilosophical to suppose any essential difference in the nature of the intellect or soul itself.

No science leads us so immediately to a survey of our own origin as this. It presents to our view the rudiments of the foetus, and shows how they gradually unfold themselves, in magnitude and figure, from conception to the time of birth: thus we may observe

“How dim the speck of entity began

“T’extend its recent form, and stretch to man.”

The utility and extent of Midwifery may be shown, by applying it to a knowledge of particular diseases. If the pathology of those maladies derived from the parent are ever to be more perfectly understood, probably that might be expected from the assistance of this art. Those

things premised, it may be proper to enquire, whether long protracted chronical diseases do not at last become hereditary ; and also, whether the placentary vessels are adapted, by their peculiar structure, to absorb from the parent the matter or efficient cause of one disease, and to exclude that of another, as may be observed by analogy, in the nutrition of plants, which, by an inherent or elective power, imbibe juices of very different qualities from the same soil ; and what is still more remarkable, the flower, fruit, and bark, of the same shrub, all vary in smell, strength, and taste, according as they are influenced by the vessels of those particular parts.

Here it might also be asked, what determines the growth of animals, and puts a ne plus ultra to their further enlargement ; or why they do not continue to grow during life ? Why are some plants and animals only the short-lived beings of a day, whilst others subsist more than a hundred years ? And why are the sensations of some animals so acute as almost to occasion pain, and in others so dull and torpid as scarcely to produce feeling equal to that of the unconscious sensitive plant ? The creeping *Ceres* blossoms at night, and dies in the morning ; and the *ephemeris* fly, although two or three years in hatching under water, when brought forth scarcely survives a single day. The first oak is said to grow for one hundred years ; and the stag is supposed to be an animal of extraordinary longevity.

In some of those diseases manifestly hereditary, as the *scrophula*, *gout*, and *lues venerea*, might not the *materies morbi* be subdued, and totally extinguished, in the human embryo, by enjoining the mother a medicated regimen during the time of pregnancy ? I believe it may be effected : and this circumstance deserves the greatest attention, as the morbid matter, in a more advanced age, might be so intimately mixed

and disseminated through the system, as never to be exterminated and totally taken away, though at particular periods of life such diseases may either lie dormant, or appear with less violence. Hence the propriety of the following lines :

“ The young disease, that must subdue at length,
“ Grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength.”

Such, therefore, is the miserable state of man, that he not only inherits some diseases before he sees the light, or enjoys the privilege of breathing, but is also afterwards subject to many more, which alternately afflict him from the cradle to the grave.

As by chemistry, the texture of natural bodies is unfolded, and their several qualities disclosed ; so the elements of human bodies, as well as the diseases to which they are subject, are illustrated and explained by the science of Midwifery ; for it brings us to an intimate acquaintance with the state and condition of man, even from the first stamp of his existence : and, therefore, if we may say with a celebrated poet, that

“ The proper study of mankind is man—
“ All our knowledge is ourselves to know.”

In consequence of many painful instances of parturition, it became necessary to make Midwifery a study, and reduce a practice so important in its consequences to an art, which was certainly effected, in the time of Moses, through many parts of the Eastern World, where science was first cultivated, and the practice solely confined to women. “ And he said—When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools, if it be a son then ye shall kill him ; and if it be a daughter, then it shall live.”—*Exodus*, chap. i, v. 16.

This custom is justified by eastern usage, and is actually practised in the courts of eastern monarchs. Thevenet (page 91) says that the kings of Persia are so afraid of being deprived of that power, and so apprehensive of being dethroned, that they destroy the children of their female relations, when they are brought to bed of boys, by putting them into an eastern trough, where they suffer them to starve. It might be imagined, from the words which Moses employs, that the Egyptian midwives used some sort of machine for facilitating delivery. This probably was a kind of chair, on which they placed the mother in time of labor. It must have been difficult at first to deviate from the practice of employing the female sex in a department to which delicacy seems to have allotted: but whether from ignorance or superstition, or any other incapacity of the fair sex, it is observable, says Dr. Potter, in his *Grecian Antiquities*, that the ancient Athenians used none but men midwives, it being forbidden by one of their laws that women or slaves should have any concern in the study or practice of physic. A young woman, named Agnodice, cut off her hair, and disguised herself in man's apparel, to study physic under a professor called Herophilus; and having attained a competent skill in that art, she revealed herself to her own sex, who agreed, with one consent, to employ none besides her. The rest of the faculty, displeased at this undertaking, cited her before the court, as one that corrupted men's wives. To obviate this accusation, she discovered her sex; upon which the faculty prosecuted her with great eagerness, as violating the laws. Afterwards, three women only were permitted by the Athenians to undertake this office.

Theocritus, in his encomium, reckons it as an extraordinary blessing that his mother brought him into the world without pain or sorrow—so great an opinion, indeed, had the ancients of the favors which the gods were believed to vouchsafe to none but the chaste and

virtuous ; whence a happy accouchement came to be looked upon as a mark of a woman's purity.

The first midwife, of whom mention is made under that name, assisted at the second labor of Rachel. The Egyptian women appear to have early shown both curiosity and attention to their profession, by the circumstances of attending the delivery of Pharez and Zarah, twins of Tamar. " And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that behold twins were in her womb. And it came to pass when she travelled, that the one put out his hand ; and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, this came out first. And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that behold his brother came out first ; and she said, how hast thou broken forth ? this breach be upon thee. Therefore his name was called Pharez. And afterwards his brother came out, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand, and his name was called Zarah."—*Gen.* chap. xxxviii, v. 27.

There are few operations for the human system more affected by the state of the air than parturition. In a southern and warmer latitude the human species is often brought into life without pain or sorrow, the usual attendants of the fair sex in mountainous and cold situations. In South America a difficult or painful birth is scarcely ever known, nothing more being necessary than to receive the infant when it spontaneously presents itself, and divide the umbilical vessels, which they do with a brand of fire, that cauterizes their orifices, and renders a ligature unnecessary. After delivery the mother and new-born infant are plunged into the water ; and the next day the former resumes the discharge of her domestic employments.

The critical moment does not terminate so happily in temperate

climates. The mother of Benjamin affords us an early example of fatality from this source, who expired after naming her son.—*Gen.* chap. xxxv, v. 18.

The bard, whose music was inspired on the banks of the Scamander, to celebrate the hero of his Iliad, compared the pains which Agamemnon felt, when wounded by the spears of Coon, to that of women in labor. Plutarch says that every nation, both savage and civilized, has adopted certain customs and ceremonies upon, or soon after, the birth of the child. There were various customs adopted in ancient times to procure easy labors, besides that of imploring their deities. One was to hold palm branches, as tokens of joy and conquest; and used as emblems of persons raised from great afflictions to prosperity.

Throughout all Asia the business of an accoucheur is unknown; and whatever art or address may be requisite, every thing is entrusted to a midwife, whose only skill is experience. These women, seated on the ground, take the women in labor on their knees, and receive the burthen in a sieve placed between their thighs. No witness interrupts this operation: the presence of even the husband is a stain on his character. After the child is born, the midwife puts the mother to bed; and calling the father of the infant, before any one yet knows the sex, informs him of it, through the veil that parts them, and receives from his hand a present, which does not enter into her regular fees. During this time, the relatives and friends assemble, either in a private tent, or in the open air, not far from the tent of the father, waiting with impatience the news of the happy birth, and the sex of the infant. No sooner has the husband been told by the midwife than he hastens to them, and informs them of these two points. The men congratulate him, and the women give themselves up to tumultuous joy, singing, and piercing the air with their cries. The

father then presents the guests with tobacco to smoke, coffee and water, and sugar when he has any; and afterwards a liquor made from fenu-greik, honey, and dry dates. This beverage is also given to the mother, as a cordial, which strengthens the viscera, relaxed by the labour; and which, it is believed, has the virtue of promoting sanguine evacuations.

A modern traveller, who dates his relation from Palermo, in Sicily, observes that "in this happy climate child-bearing is divested of all its terrors, and is only considered as a party of pleasure. This circumstance," says he, "we were ignorant of till the other day, when the Duke of Verdura, who does us the honor of the place with great attention and politeness, came to tell us we had a visit to make that was indispensable. 'The Princess Paterno,' said he, 'was brought to bed last night; and it is absolutely incumbent on you to pay your respects to her this morning.' We went about sun-set, and found the princess sitting up in bed, in an elegant undress, with a number of her friends around her. She talked as usual, and seemed to be perfectly well. This *conversazione* is repeated every night during her convalescence, which generally lasts about eleven or twelve days. The custom is universal; and as the ladies here are very prolific, there are for the most part three or four of these assemblies in the city at the same time. In conversation the other day with Princess Paterno, she appeared surprised, when I told her that we lost many of our finest women in child-bed; and that even the most fortunate and easiest labors were attended with violent pain and anguish. She lamented the fate of our ladies; and thanked Heaven that she was born a Sicilian."

Women in a state of nature retire into the woods, or seclude themselves in a hut or bower, until they bear the child. They make little preparation for their delivery, and conduct the process of labor without much inconvenience or ceremony; and if the religious customs

of the country do not require their separation for a time, they return to their usual employments and mode of living.

In some parts of Africa, when they took female captives who were pregnant, they cut the infants out of their wombs, that they might have the satisfaction of crushing them to death.

The Morlack woman neither changes her food, nor interrupts her daily fatigue, on account of her pregnancy ; and is frequently delivered in the fields or on the road, by herself, and takes the infant, washes it in the first water she finds, carries it home, and returns the day after to her usual labor, or to feed her flock.

Women in Morocco suffer but little inconvenience from child-bearing : they are frequently up the next day, and go through the duties of the house with the infant on their back. In the East Indies, many of the women lose their lives the first time they bring forth. Undomesticated animals generally bring forth their young with considerable ease ; but when domesticated occasionally lose their lives.

It was common among the ancients, as soon as the child was born, to wash it with water : whence Callimachus, speaking of Jupiter's nativity, relates,

“ As soon as you were born, and saw the light,
 “ Your mother's grateful burden and delight,
 “ She sought for some clear brook, to purify
 “ The body of so dear a progeny.”

In some countries, when the women are delivered, the men lie-in,

keep their beds, and are attended as if under real sickness. The custom of the husband keeping his bed, on the delivery of his wife, was very ancient in Spain, and other places : it also prevailed in the province of Kardan, and Tartary ; as some travellers have related of the North American Indians.

Fermin, in his *Description de Surinam*, tome 1, chap. viii, p. 81, speaks of this subject in the following words.—“ It is to be observed, that when one of their women brings forth a child, the birth is scarcely completed before the female betakes herself to the nearest river or creek, in order to wash it and herself, which she does effectually ; and in the mean time the father retires to his hammock, for the purpose of reposing himself after his fatigue of begetting the child. There he remains for six weeks ; and during all this time much sympathy is shown for his situation.” And in chap. xii—“ I once saw a negro woman, who had committed a crime, receive, as a punishment for the same, more than fifty lashes of a whip on the buttocks, only four or five hours before her accouchement ; a practice which assuredly we should regard as a violation of every law of humanity. In spite of it, however, she was delivered of her infant as easily and happily as if nothing had taken place.”

This species of cruelty the author relates very coolly, and elsewhere quotes the Bible, to prove the propriety of slavery : and he likewise makes the observation of washing the infant with water, as quoted by Dr. Bancroft.

The frequent incursions of the Tartars, and other barbarous nations into Poland, probably forced the women sometimes to leave their children exposed in the woods, where we must suppose they were nursed by bears, and other wild beasts ; otherwise, it is difficult to account for

their subsistence. It is certain that such beings have been found in the woods both of Poland and Germany, divested of almost all the properties of humanity but the form. When taken, they generally went on all fours : but it is said, that some of them have, by proper management, attained to the use of speech.

We now come to trace the progress of Midwifery, and to remark the advances which it made among the ancients and moderns, till it arrived at its present state. It is not, however, my design to give an historical account of the several authors on this subject, in exact chronological order ; for as their writings are almost innumerable, such an undertaking would not come within the narrow limits of an introductory lecture : I shall, therefore, only mention those of the greatest note, and lay before you a general view of their opinions and practice.

In the first ages women in labor were attended by their own sex, who gave assistance without method, being rather directed by necessity, than skill, in choice ; hence the progress and improvement of this art must have been very slow. In difficult cases, compassion naturally inclined them to enquire into the cause of such difficulties, by touching the patient in time of her labor-pains ; and in this manner they began to improve their slender knowledge, and made some observations that were of service in their future practice. For example, they could not help remarking, that in most labors where the infant's head presented, the patient was speedily delivered by the simple effect of the labor-pains, therefore they concluded that this was natural.

On the contrary, when the arm, or any other part but the head presented, the pains were insufficient to effect the birth ; and as they were ignorant of the proper methods of assisting, the mother died unde-

livered; consequently they had great reason to suppose that all such cases were dangerous and preternatural: hence sprung the division of labors, which they distinguished into natural and preternatural.

Midwifery at this time being chiefly exercised by women, it frequently fell into abuse. To remedy this evil, we are told that a law was enacted at Athens, excluding them from practice, and appointing men only to take upon them the province of delivering women, and directing medicines for the several diseases to which they were subject; but such was the effect of custom, that the legislative power was incessantly importuned, and at last prevailed upon, to revoke this edict, and to restore women to their former privilege of practising the art.

The two female proficient in this art, who by their practice and writings were most distinguished, and made known to posterity, were Cleopatra and Aspasia.

I think there does not appear sufficient reason for setting female practitioners aside, provided that they are properly instructed, and not only able to distinguish when there is danger, but conscientiously endeavour to avoid it, by sending for further assistance in time, which is too frequently neglected; and, therefore, when men of the profession are called in, they should treat them with becoming civility, and, if possible, protect them from blame; as an injury to their reputation would be followed by the loss of business and of bread.

The progress and improvement of Midwifery may be dated from the time of Hippocrates, who practised in Greece four hundred and sixty years before the birth of Christ. He wrote several books professedly on the diseases of women and children. Erotion took great pains to point

out the true works of Hippocrates ; but makes no mention of the book *De Virginibus*.

The medicines recommended by this author are odd, and indelicate ; and his theory extremely erroneous. For instance, in the hysteric passion, he asserts that the womb changes its place, and that it rises to the stomach and heart ; so that one would be apt to conclude he had never seen the situation of the uterus in the dissection of the human body, otherwise he could not have omitted to remark its connection to the surrounding parts.

His doctrine of conception was adopted by authors of the first rank, and adhered to even till the last century ; but his method of practice deserves no attention ; for it appears by a survey of his works, as well as those of the ancients in general, how imperfectly the Obstetric Art was known. So that if we compare Hippocrates discoursing on this subject, with the same Hippocrates speaking on the nature of diseases, pointing out their distinctions, and prognosticating their several events,—in the first, he is a stranger to the structure and functions of the parts appropriated to generation and parturition ; but in the last is wonderfully sagacious, accurate, and just, and therefore is a nice observer of Nature, and a faithful recorder of her opinions. He has stood the test of all ages, and justly continues admired and esteemed to the present time.

Hippocrates has had his full share of fame ; for his very name seems to have inspired with enthusiasm every succeeding writer ; as all those of whom we have been accustomed to think with veneration, or to speak with respect, have held him up to our view as an example to be imitated, and as a pattern to be exactly copied, as if he had exhausted all the fountains of medical knowledge and truth. Whether we consider

his writings with regard to the strict morality which they inculcate, the liberal conduct which they recommend, or the strong and extensive observations with which they abound, it is impossible for us to withhold our esteem. But, if there be any progressive power in the human mind, if any advantage be obtained in the practice of medicine, by the knowledge of the circulation of the blood, or of an infinitely more correct anatomy, and physiology at large, by the vast discoveries and improvements, by a more copious and *materia medica*, by the recorded experience of so many ages, or by the several collateral arts which medicine calls in for its aid, we may surely be permitted to say that Hippocrates ought not to be considered as the guide of physicians at the present day.

From the writings of Hippocrates it appears that the art of Midwifery was still but beginning to dawn.—See book vii, chap. 29.

Moschion is the next. According to the opinion of Astruc, he lived about eighteen centuries ago: but Smellie says he is supposed to have lived in the time of Nero, that is about seventeen centuries. He was a Greek author, and wrote a treatise (said to be the first) on the art of Midwifery. However this may be, he says more to the purpose than either Hippocrates or Celsus, as may be easily perceived by the following extract.

In difficult births, (he says) the parts are first of all to be relaxed with oil. If the passage of urine is obstructed by a stone in the neck of the bladder, the water must be drawn off with a catheter: if the *fæces* are indurated, give a clyster, and pierce the membranes with a lancet. He says the best position is that of the head presenting, the hands and feet being mingled, and disposed along the sides. If the

position is not right, and cannot be amended by putting the woman in proper postures, he advises us to introduce the hand, when the os uteri is open, and turn the child. If a foot presents, (says he) push it back, and bring the fœtus by both feet, the arms being pressed down along the sides: if the knee or hip presents, they must be also pushed back, and the child brought by the feet: if the back presents, introduce the hand, and alter the position by turning to the feet, or to the hand, if it be nearest: and if the head is large, it must be opened, &c. &c.

Upon the doctrines of these three authors, above quoted, there arose amongst succeeding physicians, and obstetric practitioners, a dispute with respect to turning the child for delivery, which existed above sixteen centuries. One party, adhering to Hippocrates, taught, that whenever the child laid across, or presented in any unnatural position, even if the feet offered, it should be turned so with the operator's hand that the head might come foremost. The other party, abiding by Celsus and Moschion, approved of bringing it by the feet. Galen, and ten others, to Hippocrates: Ætius, and nine others, to Celsus and Moschion.

Aristotle also wrote on the subject of Midwifery, particularly on the generations of animals; and though his rules for practice are few, and scarcely to be regarded, yet, in his seventh book on this subject, are to be found several observations worthy of remark, under the following heads—of the signs of puberty in men and women; of the menses; the signs of conception; and the symptoms which happen from thence to the time of labor; also of the situation of the fœtus in utero; the child's birth; and of the placenta and funis. He observes, that women suffer more than quadrupeds in the time of parturition; that the fœtus is nourished by the funis, and naturally presents with the head: but the most extra-

ordinary of all his positions is, that blind and lame children are generated of blind and lame parents ; from which it is plain he had adopted the doctrine of Hippocrates, who asserted that the semen is a combination of organical particles, derived from the several parts of the body, and that, being associated, they form the rudiments of the embryo.

Cornelius Celsus, who might justly be called the Latin Hippocrates, is the next author of note : he lived in the reign of Tiberius, A. D. 35, and wrote a treatise on medicine, in the Latin tongue, much admired for its elegance of style ; but whether he was really a physician, or a man of uncommon understanding, whose natural genius led him to the study of that science, is not certainly known ; for he wrote on war and agriculture as well as physic. In his seventh book he treats of the diseases of women, and the method of extracting a dead foetus ; but what he lays down is chiefly borrowed from the Greek physicians, particularly Hippocrates ; so that he is rather consulted as the standard of elegance and true purity of style, than for any thing remarkably instructive on this subject.

Galen, of Pergamus, a celebrated Greek physician, was born A.D. 132, and lived in the reign of Adrian, about six hundred years after the time of Hippocrates. He travelled through several provinces of the Roman empire, and afterwards resided at Alexandria, in Egypt, which was then the most celebrated school of medicine in the world ; but at last returned to his native country, where he died. He appears to be a man of great learning, and of subtle, discerning genius ; but he was assuming and vain-glorious, arrogating to himself the highest honors, and at the same time attempting to depreciate and lessen the authority of other physicians. He is allowed to be the best commentator on the works of Hippocrates, though in his relation of things he is circumlocutory and

diffuse. He wrote several books on the subject of Midwifery, wherein he lays claim to the discovery of those tubes belonging to it, which were afterwards said to be found out by Fallopius.

To enumerate the several ancient authors who have written on the present subject would be tedious and unnecessary; and therefore, from Galen down to the time of Pareus, it will be sufficient only to mention those of principal note.

Œtius, who lived A.D. 380, left a system of physic in Greek, which was translated into Latin by Cernarius, and printed at Basil, under the title of *Contracta ex Veteribus Medicina*, the last book of which treats fully and judiciously on the diseases of women. He describes the situation, magnitude, and figure of the uterus, and gives a circumstantial account of difficult births; he likewise takes notice, that delivery may be retarded by the too early rupture, or by the preternatural rigidity of the membranes containing the child, and directs what is necessary to be done on those occasions. He seems an author of exceeding merit and candor, always naming the originals from whence his quotations are taken, which, in general, are judiciously chosen and well applied.

This was the state of the Obstetric Art among the Greeks and Romans; but when the western empire was invaded and ravaged by the Goths and Vandals, who were a barbarous people, and enemies to the polite arts, the several sciences, for want of patronage, began to languish, and at last were neglected and forgot. The fate of learning in the east was much the same soon after; for the Saracens subdued Egypt, and destroyed the famous library at Alexandria, which was then the most celebrated school of medicine in the world; the books being dispersed

by the caliph's order, and burnt at the several bagnios. But, in proportion as learning declined among the Greeks, it began to flourish among the Arabians, who extended their empire over Asia, Africa, and Europe, under the caliph Almamon Abdalla, who reigned A.D. 813, and caused the Greek authors to be translated into the Syriac and Arabic tongues, for several of them were fortunately preserved, although the public library was destroyed.

Avicenna, a Mahometan physician, was born in Persia, and lived A.D. 1000. He wrote a book called *Canon Medicinæ*, divided into five sections. In the third he speaks of conception, pregnancy, and delivery ; and also of disorders peculiar to women. Though the forceps is supposed a modern invention, he mentions that instrument, and such as was manifestly intended to save the child.

Albucasis, an Arabian surgeon, is supposed to have lived A.D. 1085, and likewise treats on the diseases of women. He is remarkable for delineating and describing the several instruments then in use, and among the rest gives a figure of the forceps.

From this period to the year 1200, the Europeans, by their commerce with the Saracens, became acquainted with the sciences. Hence the art of physic was cultivated, and at last gave rise to two of the most ancient colleges of medicine in Europe, namely, those of Salerno and Montpellier, where the doctrines of the Arabian physicians were principally taught, till the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, in the year 1453 ; for at this time the several learned men fled from thence, and took refuge in different parts of Europe, particularly in Italy and France, where they carried the sciences : and as learning revived, men of genius

now began to study Hippocrates, and the other Greek physicians ; and the works of Avicenna and Razes, whose authorities had long prevailed, were now justly rejected.

Thus was the Grecian art of medicine restored, and, by degrees, a solid system of physic established, by which the causes and cure of diseases were more rationally considered, and more accurately distinguished.

From this time to that of Pareus, the great promoter of obstetrical knowledge, the general practice of the ancients was as follows : if the infant did not present naturally, they shook the woman, and altered her position ; a practice so irrational, that it could answer no purpose but that of tormenting the patient. The operator also attempted to bring the head to the right position ; and, if he failed, he then endeavoured to deliver by the feet. If none of these methods succeeded, it was treated as a dead child, and extracted with crotchets ; but if it were too large to pass whole, they dismembered and extracted it piece-meal.

In the year 1575, Pareus, a French author, in his 24th book, where he treats on generation and the delivery of women, entirely rejecting those irrational proceedings of the ancients, in all preternatural cases, expressly directs the child to be turned, and delivered by the feet, which was a noble endeavour towards the advancement of the art, for by this judicious method many women were saved, who otherwise must have died undelivered.

From this time the improvements of Midwifery were many and great, both by manual operation, and in the invention of new instruments. Guillemeau, who was a scholar of Pareus, also wrote expressly on the same

subject, and improves much on the rules laid down by his predecessors. In profuse hæmorrhages he orders the membranes to be broken, and the patient to be speedily delivered: he also takes notice of the ruptured uterus, some instances of which had fallen under his own observation.

From the time of Guillemeau till that of Mauriceau, (being upwards of half a century) several useful tracts were published. Severinus published a book on pregnancy and delivery: and, in the year 1628, G. Nymmanus printed his dissertation, *De Vitâ Fœtûs in Utero*, wherein he proves that the infant may survive a considerable time after the mother's death; and, therefore, admonishes magistrates, and those who have the direction of public affairs, to permit the opening of such women as die undelivered, in order to preserve the child.

The works of Sennertus, a celebrated professor of physic at Wittemberg, were published in the year 1640; in which is to be found a valuable practical treatise on the diseases of women and children, where the description of the symptoms appears accurate, and the intention of cure is laid down with clearness and profound skill.

A. D. 1668, Mauriceau, after much experience at the Hôtel Dieu, published a book on Midwifery, which came nearer to a complete system, in what regards the practice, than any thing which went before it. But his doctrine of conception is false and erroneous, and his theory vague and irrational; though his practical aphorisms are judicious, and excellently deduced.

Various now were the authors on Midwifery; for Dionis, Peu, and Portal, published their several works: and not long after, Saviard, who had practised at the Hôtel Dieu, also published several observations

on the diseases of women, and the method of assisting in difficult labors. Daventer, a Dutch physician, printed his book on the art of Midwifery in the year 1701, and became eminent by remarking, that the most common cause of difficult labors arises from an oblique situation of the uterus: the fallacy of which opinion will be shewn in the subsequent Lectures. Besides, although this passed for a discovery of Daventer, it was observed by De Graaf long before. Winckler likewise takes notice of the same thing; and says it was observed of old. Those points of doctrine for which Daventer most deserves commendation are to be found in his observations on touching; from which many useful indications may be taken, concerning the event of the labor.

From this time several detached pieces were published, though nothing very considerable till Lamott's book appeared, in which are found many judicious observations, candidly and circumstantially laid down, and therefore worthy of remark. But this author, though a modern, probably knew not the use of the forceps; for in laborious cases, where the difficulty is great, he directs the child to be turned, and brought by the feet.

About the year 1721 several curious cases were published by the celebrated Ruysch; and also his tract, *De Musculo in Fundo Uteri Observatio*. Puzos, in the Memoirs of the Royal Academy of Surgery at Paris, attempts to show a more safe and gentle method of proceeding in floodings than had before been practised on such occasions, which will hereafter be duly considered.

Levret, a celebrated professor of Midwifery at Paris, has also, from time to time, published three volumes on the subject of Midwifery. In the first he treats on that art as demonstrated on mechanical

principles. The second comprehends his observations, with the description and figure of the different forceps in use. The third volume treats on the polypus; and describes the figure of his instruments for tying polypus tumors of the uterus.

Rodereus, professor of Midwifery in the University of Gottingen, in the year 1759 printed the second volume of his work, in which the practice of Midwifery is concisely laid down: but as a public teacher, whose doctrine may have had considerable influence on those who attended his lectures, it is much to be regretted that he shew an uncommon propensity to the use of instruments, even those of the destructive kind. He also published his anatomical tables of the gravid uterus, where some of the parts are finely delineated; but it is presumed those of Dr. Hunter far surpass them, both in the number of plates, and elegance of their execution.

About the same time, H. Crantz, professor of Midwifery at Vienna, published a work, in which he gives a full historical account of the different instruments used in Midwifery. He asserts that the use of the crotchet is never required, although it has often been applied; and thinks it ought to be deemed homicide, where the head of a living child is opened, even though the life of the mother should be in danger: and therefore censures Rodereus with uncommon severity for inculcating such practice. The author shows a humane attention to the life of the infant; but it would have been not less commendable had he also been more merciful to the reputation of his brother professors.

From this time, if any better means were discovered, none were made public till 1733, when Mr. Chapman, an English surgeon, published a treatise on Midwifery, wherein he described the use of forceps,

and gave a cut of them in a second edition two years afterwards. He was the second public teacher of Midwifery in London. These forceps are generally believed to have been invented by the Chamberlains, a medical English family, which flourished since the time of Mauriceau. One of this family, namely Dr. Hugh Chamberlain, published a fifth edition of his translation of Mauriceau's first volume, 1716; in the preface of which he tells us that his father, brothers, and himself, had attained to, and long practised, a way to deliver women without any prejudice to them or their infants, even in such cases as used to be treated with hooks, by which one or both must be endangered, if not destroyed.

I believe it would be unjust to deny Mawbray the credit of having been the first teacher of Midwifery in London. He gave his lectures at a house in Bond Street, 1725: he also established a Lying-in Hospital in London, similar to the Hôtel Dieu, at Paris, where students might have an opportunity of learning the art. From this sprung up the Middlesex Hospital, in the Year 1745, which at first was fixed in Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road: after this, the British Lying-in Hospital, and various others.

About this time also lived Dr. Chamberlain, a very celebrated physician, who applied himself to this branch of the profession. He had three sons, who, with the father, were supposed to have a better method of relieving women in cases of difficult labors than any other person, by means of an instrument said to be the forceps, which Dr. Denman believes to have been a vectis; or perhaps, says he, they had more than one instrument. It is probable that the fortune and eminence acquired by the supposed advantages of the method of the Chamberlains, which they reserved as a secret, might be the occasion that many gentlemen

engaged in practice endeavoured to establish themselves upon the same principle,—that is, of concealing the instruments they used; of which class was Dr. Bamber.

It is certain, according to Astruc, that Maria Theresa, wife of Louis XIV. employed women in her labors; and the example of the queen determined the conduct of the princesses and court ladies, and likewise of the other ladies of the city.

The same author tells us, that he has been assured that the epoch of the employment of men-midwives goes no further back than the lying-in of Madame de la Valière in 1663. As she desired it might be kept a secret, she sent for Julian Clement, a surgeon of reputation: he was conducted with the greatest secrecy into a house where the lady was, with her face covered with a hood, and where, it was said, the king was concealed in the curtains of the bed. The same surgeon was employed in the subsequent labors of the same lady; and as he was very successful with her, men-midwives afterwards came into repute, and the princess made use of surgeons on similar occasions; and as soon as this became fashionable, the name of *accoucheur* was invented, to signify this class of men.

Foreign countries soon adopted the custom, and likewise the name of *accoucheur*, though they had no such term in their own language: but in Britain they have more generally been called men-midwives.

Dr. Smellie died in the year 1763, at Lanark, in Scotland. He was the first who considered the shape of the pelvis. He demonstrated that in natural labor the vertex or crown of the head presented at the brim of the pelvis, one ear of the child turned towards the pubes, the

other to the sacrum ; but that when it had passed through that straight, it makes half a turn, which brings the forehead into the hollow of the sacrum. He abolished many superstitious notions, and erroneous opinions and customs, that prevailed in the management of lying-in women and children. Dr. William Douglass, who styled himself Physician Extraordinary to the Prince of Wales, and man-midwife, addressed two letters to Dr. Smellie in the year 1748, accusing him of degrading the profession, by teaching Midwifery at a very low price, and giving certificates to pupils who had only attended him a few weeks, by which means the number of practitioners enormously multiplied, and many improper persons were admitted. Apothecaries, said he, resorted from all parts of the country, and at the end of two or three weeks returned to their shops armed with diplomas signed by the professor, attesting their proficiency in the art. These were hung up in the most conspicuous parts of their house, and no doubt surveyed with veneration by their patients.

In your bills, he says, you set forth that you give an universal lecture on Midwifery for half a guinea, or four lectures for a guinea. In these universal lectures the whole mystery of the art was to be unfolded. He charges him also with hanging out a paper lantern, with the words Midwifery taught here for five shillings—each lecture, we presume.

It is probable, that having practised the first nineteen years at a small town in Scotland, where medical fees may be supposed to be very low, he might not think the price he demanded for his instructions so insignificant as it really was.

One of his pupils speaks of him thus :—No man was more ready than Dr. Smellie to crave advice when danger or difficulty occurred ; and no man was more communicative, without the least self-sufficiency or

ostentation. He never officiously intermeddled in the affairs of others, or strove to initiate himself into practice by deprecating the characters of other men; but made his way into business by the dint of merit alone, and maintained his reputation by the most beneficent and disinterested behaviour. In the first ten years his lectures were attended by nine hundred pupils, besides females fitted for midwives.

Thus in superior minds we find a generosity of sentiment which disdains all selfish considerations, while grovelling souls are absorbed in private views, and hate that excellence which they cannot reach.

Those who are not sufficiently conversant in practice, from motives of fear, which always magnify the danger, and suggest the worst, are often led to a more precipitated application of instruments than is necessary, or consistent with the patient's safety. On the other hand, there are some who exclaim against all instruments whatever, pretending that they are dangerous and unnecessary: but it may with reason be asked, whether this does not arise from artifice in such declaimers, and an endeavour to recommend themselves to the good opinion of timorous and weak minded women, who are alarmed at the very name of an instrument, and had almost rather die than call in the assistance of those who are said to make use of them? for all such as have candor and skill must allow that instruments, particularly the forceps, are sometimes so absolutely necessary towards the preservation of both the mother and child, that he who either wants dexterity or resolution to apply them would be deficient in the duties of his office.

Smellie, Denman, Hamilton, Burns, Davies, and Gooch, are the principal English writers on the subject of Midwifery. Besides a due attention to many of the authors already mentioned, I shall here-

after occasionally remark such new observations and capital improvements as have been laid down from time to time by the most eminent modern professors of Midwifery, in different parts of Europe.

Whoever teaches Midwifery ought to lay before those intending to study it a clear and comprehensive view of all its branches, and also the means most conducive to a perfect knowledge of the whole.

Midwifery, respecting its operative part, may be called an art; but as it comprehends the nature and treatment of diseases, it ought also to be considered as a science. It is divided into theory and practice. Theory consists in a competent knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of the human body, and particularly in what relates to generation and the menstrual flux, the economy of the gravid uterus, the nature of parturition, and the doctrine of several diseases incident to women and children. The method of assisting with dexterity and skill in laborious and preternatural labors, and of acting with judgment in all cases of danger or difficulty, constitutes the practical part. Without a previous and distinct knowledge of all these, no one deserves the name of an accoucheur : for if he ventures to give advice or assistance which is not founded on rational theory, and the established rules of his profession, he will act like a bungling mechanic, who attempts to repair a complex machine without being acquainted with the several wheels and springs which compose it, or the principles upon which its motion depends.

From a regard to the safety of the woman, and the public good, as well as the credit of the profession, it is much to be wished that none were permitted to practise Midwifery till they had given sufficient testimony of their skill, by due examination before gentlemen appointed by authority for that purpose, as is usual in all branches of physic and surgery.

We should not then find the town and country over-run with ignorant and half-instructed pretenders of both sexes, who impose on the credulous, and supply their want of knowledge by arrogance and vain-boasting, or by a slavish submission to the obstinacy or avarice of nurses and old women.

Whatever knowledge a man may possess, or however respectable he may appear in his profession, it is right he should regulate his conduct by the rules of true policy, and a prudent attention to his own interest: but this is not to be done by a timorous and time-serving deportment; not by chiming in with the prejudices of the vulgar, or paying compliments to the wealthy and great at the expense of truth; not by imposing on the ignorant with a pompous and pedantic jargon, or astonishing them with miraculous and pretended cures; but by principles directly opposite to all these. If such artifices degrade the lowest of mankind, surely they are unworthy of men who profess a liberal science, whom no interest should prompt to those base and ignoble proceedings, even could they be supposed to escape detection and contempt.

The safety of the patient depends on the operator's skill in this, in unison with physic and surgery; and, therefore, it is the indispensable duty of every one who engages in it, to render himself duly qualified. He is not to suppose that a course or two of lectures is sufficient for this, and that he may then set out in practice, as if women had neither life nor health which might suffer by his want of judgment: but, on the contrary, after obtaining a rational theory, he should then have frequent opportunities of extensive practice, without which he will never acquire dexterity of hand, or that resolution and steadiness so necessary in cases of danger or difficulty. Instead of this, his behaviour will be timorous and confused; and no one can reasonably expect to engage the confidence

of others, who thus apparently distrusts himself. Such conduct will always subject him to censure ; and where another of his profession is sent for, and performs what he is unable to do himself, it will injure his reputation, and hinder his advancement in life. The force of habit is so remarkable in the difficult operations of Midwifery, that it may be truly said, it is practice which makes perfect ; for the hand gains strength and dexterity in proportion to its use, and the mind, being familiar with danger, becomes more circumspect and deliberate than before : whereas fear enervates the hand, destroys recollection, and puts the thoughts into confusion.

The utility of permitting students, when duly qualified, and under proper regulations, to attend lying-in charities, is so obvious, that this custom was adopted in France many years ago, and is now allowed in other parts of Europe. Such privileges manifestly tend to the improvement of Midwifery, and are productive of universal good, by extending the benefits of that art to different parts of the kingdom.

It was owing to the wise and early institution of lying-in hospitals in Paris, and to the peculiar advantages and improvements arising from them, that students in Midwifery formerly resorted thither from other nations : but though this art is no where more rationally now taught, or more judiciously practised, than in London, it must be confessed that we were at first indebted to the French for many of its most capital improvements.

Nothing will more redound to the good of the community than a humane attention to the health and well-being of the industrious poor. A man of this profession, by his advice and timely assistance, often has it in his power to administer relief and comfort to the afflicted, and even

to preserve life itself. To those who are blest with sympathy and benevolence of heart, this will afford the most exalted pleasure, especially where such assistance is given to women, who are to be considered as the weaker sex, and unable to help each other. At such times none who are worthy to be called men will desert even the poorest of them. Their nerves are strung to the same sensations of pleasure and pain as those of the rich; they are formed of the same materials, and ordained to the same end; and if we look back to our own origin, we shall find that once we were in reality parts of themselves, for we sprung from their bodies, we were nourished by their blood, and should have perished in the very commencement of our being, had we not been sustained, nursed up, cherished on their tender bosoms, and protected by their unwearied care.

The office of an accoucheur, which is attended with great fatigue of body, and anxiety of mind, is next to be considered. His patience will be put to many severe trials, by the obstinacy and caprice of those under his care, by the petulance and self-sufficiency of ignorant nurses, or the malignant whispers of malice or envy. The life of the patient, and his own reputation, are depending; and where the event is fatal, he will often meet with undeserved censure, and the most illiberal treatment, especially among the lower classes of people, who, being swayed by prejudice and vulgar errors, judge without reason, and condemn without mercy. This will render the time of his attendance irksome and tedious: but as long as human nature continues what it is, he must expect sometimes to meet with such unwelcome behaviour. The tongue of slander is as much at liberty as the tongue of truth: and since it is not in his power to prevent the first from proclaiming injurious falsehoods, his principal happiness will be to act in such a manner as not to deserve it; and being thus conscious of having done his duty, that will afford him consolation that nothing can take away.

Besides these qualifications, there are others no less necessary for the accoucheur, in common with the rest of his profession. Every one is a judge of his appearance and deportment, though not of his skill; and therefore the method of pleasing, as far as it is strictly conformable to the principles of honor, and the rules of good breeding, ought to make no inconsiderable part of his character. Hoffman was so sensible of this, that he published his *Medicus Politicus*; and Bohnius also wrote *De Officio Medico*: but what has been laid down on that subject by the late Dr. Gregory is preferable to all the rest, having delivered his sentiments with becoming freedom, and the zeal of a physician, honestly solicitous for the credit of his profession, and the advancement of true medical knowledge.

Whoever practises Midwifery ought to be sober, patient, and discreet, polite and easy in his address, and of a modest and humane disposition; yet possessed of so much resolution as not to be alarmed or disconcerted in cases of the greatest danger. At all such times he should duly consider, and deliberately attend to the several symptoms and circumstances before him, taking care to proceed with the distinct exercise of his judgment and reason, as a few grains of error, or proper discernment, in extreme danger, will sometimes turn the scale of life or death. When the patient's situation is truly alarming, and the event is likely to be fatal, her relations and friends should be apprised of it; and where the operator finds the case singularly perplexing, the advice of another, eminent for his candor and skill, ought to be called in: but, whether in consultation with those of his profession, or in speaking to others, he should deliver his opinion with clearness and prudent caution, avoiding all such pedantic phrases, and mysterious terms of art, as are fit for conjurors rather than men of science. He should avail himself of no illiberal methods, or attempt to filch a good name at the expense of

another's reputation ; but in all things, as becomes a man of honor and true benevolence, endeavour to promote the good of society without ostentation, to support the credit of his profession without pride, and to practise condescension without artifice or meanness. Whatever assistance women may require in the hour of their distress, should be regarded with the utmost delicacy, and a modest indifference, their situation at this time being only such as it has ever been from the beginning of the world, and as it will still continue according to the stated laws of nature. But to inculcate that which must be obvious to all men possessed of a sense of their duty, or the common principles of humanity, would be an unnecessary waste of time. Should one in a thousand be found of a different character, surely it would be inconsiderate and unjust to censure the whole profession for the delinquency of so small a part. It is not sufficient to say that those who practise Midwifery have frequent opportunities of acting dishonorably, for if the means of violating their faith and honor could be proved the cause of their doing so, all mutual confidence would then totally cease, and mankind in general, as well as they, would of course be immoral and base, since there is no station or department in life which does not daily afford opportunities of becoming vicious.

The early reading of books, during attendance at lectures, does not seem eligible, as it often misleads the student, and gives a false bias to his judgment. It will first be requisite to acquire the true principles of the science, with a competent skill of practical knowledge ; and with such guides you will be less liable to err, in adopting many things as right which ought to have been rejected as exceptionable.

To conclude : the great importance of the science of Midwifery, whether considered in a moral or political view, is sufficiently evident ;

and was its utility only confined to the preservation of women and their offspring, that alone would effectually recommend it to all who are tenderly solicitous for their safety: but, by a review of its several advantages, it appears a necessary branch of philosophy, as well as physic. The public administration of justice, under certain circumstances, calls for its assistance; and even the cause of religion itself has been promoted by its extensive influence. It may therefore be truly said that it contributes to the good of society, and the general interest of mankind, in a manner superior to all other sciences.

I shall now, reader, trespass no longer on your time, as it must evidently appear, from what has already been said, that all those who propose to study Midwifery, and to become deservedly eminent in their profession, ought principally to avail themselves of practical knowledge, founded on a previous rational theory; and not indolently content themselves with that superficial and imperfect method of being instructed which has hitherto so long prevailed, to the danger of the patient, the discredit of the science, and the injury of their own reputation.

There remains yet much to be done towards the improvement of this department of medical science. Let me exhort all members of so honorable a profession early to seek knowledge, and, in their future researches, to take this as their motto:—

“Nil sine magno labore :

“Labor omnia vincet.”

THE END.

